

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



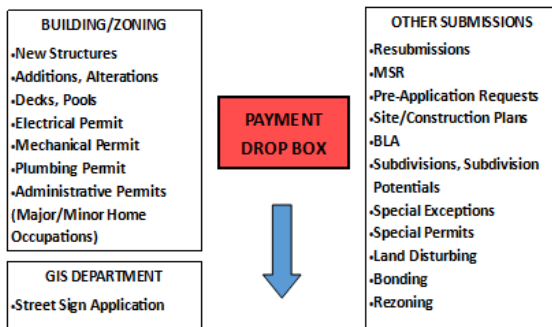
Inside Community Development

Issue 36 — 2nd Quarter 2020

OPEN for Business with Lobby Service

While County buildings have been closed to the public due to the onset of COVID-19, Community Development has been open for business. Staff has continued to serve the needs of our businesses and residents via phone, email, conference calls and various virtual meeting platforms. Plans and permits are being processed electronically and via mail. As we start to think about readying the office for a reopening, it is important to begin by thanking all staff working in the office and from home

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION DROP OFF CENTER



fulfilling the important duties related to Community Development. Staff's can-do attitude during these unique times has been nothing short of inspiring. The continued perseverance and dedication to continue the work at hand is recognized and appreciated.

Although the internal offices will remain closed a bit longer, we are preparing for a "soft" opening by allowing public access to the 3rd floor Court-house lobby for drop off and pick up services. Lobby service will be up and running on June 24, 2020 with signage guiding applicants on how to use this expanded amenity. With lobby services in place, the public may drop off applications in designated areas. There will be a locked drop box for payments, which staff will check frequently. Staff will contact applicants when the plans or permits are ready to be picked up.

PLACE MONEY IN DROP BOX
PLACE APPLICATION MATERIALS/PLANS IN TRAYS OR BINS

MAKE SURE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED
STAFF WILL CONTACT YOU WHEN APPROVED PLANS
ARE READY FOR PICK UP

Safety is key to fully reopen the doors to the public. A full reopening will not take place until front line counters are fitted with safety glass. Masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, and anti-bacterial spray will continue to be readily available for the foreseeable future.

We thank our staff and our customers for their patience.

Example of 3rd Floor Lobby Signage

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

JULY 9

AUGUST 13

SEPTEMBER 10

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEET
THE SECOND THURSDAY OF
EACH MONTH.

PLANNING COMMISSION

JULY, AUGUST AND

SEPTEMBER MEETING DATES

ARE TBD

THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETS
THE THIRD THURSDAY OF
EACH MONTH.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

JULY, AUGUST AND

SEPTEMBER MEETING DATES

ARE TBD

THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
MEETS THE FIRST THURSDAY OF
EACH MONTH.

In Fauquier County, the building permit process is mandated by State law and it protects you, your family and your investment. Building permits are written authorizations issued by the County to construct a project. Building permits are issued to ensure that the project's approved plans comply with local and state code requirements. These local and state codes seek to protect the safety and welfare of the public at large. They are required for most construction or remodeling projects, in order to ensure the safety of the work and its compliance with building, construction, and zoning codes.

Permits can also be a form of consumer protection. A contractor who does not pull required permits might lack appropriate licensing and that is something you should know before a project starts. Permits require a County building inspector to sign off on work at various stages, depending on the type of project. This provides assurance that the framing, plumbing, electrical or other work meets code. Also, a lack of required permits may affect your home's insurance coverage. Unpermitted work may also be discovered when future buyers hire an inspector, who may seek records related to improvements. It is much harder to obtain a permit after the fact than it is to start from scratch. Keep in mind that it is also a misdemeanor under State law to work without permits.

But how do you know what projects require a permit? The easiest way is to contact the County Building Department and ask. Generally speaking, any improvement that changes the home's electrical, plumbing or structural design requires a permit. This means adding on to the home or moving walls inside the existing structure, especially if the walls bear a load, will require a permit. For more information or to discuss your project and the need for a building permit with a County representative, please give Building/Permitting staff a call at 540-422-8230.

A Grave Reality: Fauquier County Cemeteries Need to be Recorded

The first step to protecting historic resources is identification. However, the identification process is made more difficult when the location of a historic place is forgotten over time and eventually erased from collective memory. This is most true of family cemeteries, which in Virginia, are considered archaeological sites. Fauquier County is fortunate in that it retains many of its family and community cemeteries. It is estimated that over 500 remain. But this is an approximation because the majority have not been officially identified and recorded. Therefore, most family cemeteries in Fauquier are subject to inadvertent destruction.

But there is good news! Citizens have the power to identify and record these fragile resources. The Community Development Department has created a Cemetery Identification Form. It can be accessed through the GIS Department webpage, <https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments-a-g/gis-mapping/forms-and-information>. A Microsoft Word version of the form is available upon request. When a completed form is sent to the GIS Department, GIS staff then place the approximate location of the cemetery on the County map. The information on the form is used by Community Development to understand the resource and assess its location when land development applications are submitted. You do not have to be a family member or descendent to record a cemetery. Anyone can! The Fauquier County Preservation Planner is here to help. Contact Wendy Wheatcraft with questions or concerns at Wendy.Wheatcraft@fauquiercounty.gov or (540) 422-8210.

A recent conversation with a citizen resulted in the completion of a Fauquier County Cemetery Identification Form for the Holtzclaw Cemetery located west of Warrenton. This cemetery is now identified on the County GIS.



Holtzclaw Cemetery, surrounded by stone fence, ca. 1938



Holtzclaw Cemetery, 2020

Staff Announcements

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SMART SCALE is the preeminent funding program for transportation projects in Virginia. The program scores projects based on safety, congestion reduction, accessibility, economic development, land use, environmental benefit and overall cost. During this funding cycle, Fauquier County submitted seven projects to VDOT for initial screening and review. After initial screening, applications will be refined and submitted for final scoring. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will make a final decision on which projects will be funded in June 2021. Projects that are selected will be funded through construction, with construction likely starting in fiscal year 2026-2027.

The County's submissions include two applications for the redesign of the I-66 and Route 17 interchange at Exit 28 near Marshall. The application for the I-66 westbound (northern end) interchange proposes a reconfiguration to include a roundabout. The other application is for the south side of the interchange. To improve safety, it proposes to close or restrict median crossovers and relocate the displaced turning movements further south on Route 17. Applications for intersections at Route 29 and Lees Mill Road as well Covingtons Corner Road and Route 17, propose a Restricted Crossing U-Turn (R-CUT), which restricts left turns out of the side streets and relocates the movement downstream via a U-Turn. Another application is proposing a new roundabout with sidewalks and crosswalks at the Route 55 and Zulla Road/Belvoir Road intersection. Lastly, two projects identified by the Route 29 New Baltimore Advisory Panel have been submitted for pre-application screening. One application is proposing an additional right turn lane from Vint Hill Road onto Route 29 northbound, to provide more capacity at the intersection. The other is suggesting a second left turn lane be added to Broad Run Church Road at its Route 29 intersection to reduce wait time at the intersection.

All of these projects are aimed at improving safety with cost effective solutions. More information on the projects can be found here: [4/29/2020 presentation](#) and [memo to the Board of Supervisors](#). If there are any questions or comments, please contact Joe Costello, Transportation Planner at Joseph.Costello@fauquiercounty.gov



Proposed Additional Right Turn Lane at
Broad Run Church Road and Route 15/29

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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<https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments-a-g/community-development>

Questions about or suggestions for the newsletter: Email us at: Maureen.Williamson@fauquiercounty.gov

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Teleworking—A Necessary Experiment or Here to Stay?

Since mid-March, with the spread of COVID-19, Community Development has been transitioning part of its workforce to a teleworking model in an effort to comply with “safer at home” orders and to prevent the spread of infection. COVID-19 will likely have permanent impacts on every employer’s workplace culture, including Community Development. The talk of a “new normal” for the workplace is very real. As the closure announcement came, Departments were tasked with getting as many staff as possible working out of the office and set up to telework. In the new environment, approximately fifty percent of the department’s staff are teleworking on a rotating basis.

Working from home may indeed become the rule for many in the wake or continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. So, how do Community Development staffers feel about the telework option? To get insight, we asked staff who have been teleworking since the onset of the closure how they felt about working remotely and the pros and cons as they see them. We also asked the same questions of staff who have been working in the office since the closure. Has it been business as usual for these staffers? A third point of view was obtained when those working in the office and alternating one week on/one week off were asked about telework versus working in the office. Below is a sampling of staff thoughts on what may become the “new normal” workplace.

Fran Williams, Administrative Manager, has also been working from home since the decision was made to close the offices to the public approximately eleven weeks ago. Fran said: “The pandemic has allowed me the opportunity to telework - something I had never contemplated doing in the past.” She continued by saying, “Being able to work from home during this time due to my own at-risk health issues, and more importantly, those of my husband, has truly been a blessing and something that I am extremely appreciative of.” Fran admits to some challenges over the past few weeks at home like unreliable Internet connectivity on cloudy days and missing her work family. She noted that telephone conference calls, email and various other means have allowed her to stay connected with fellow staff members. Fran concluded by adding, “This has been a wonderful opportunity and one that I am truly thankful for. I believe that teleworking has proven to be a viable option, not just for me, but for other employees as well.”

From another work perspective, Dean Dodson, Planning Associate II, feels that working in the office every day has been a “nice constant in this crazy, ever-changing COVID-19 world we are living in.” He said that the routine of going into work every day is one of the few things he has been able to do without major disruption. He commented that with offices closed to the public, he relies more heavily on communication through phone and email, but for the most part he has been able to work without any major changes.

Stephanie Miller, Planner II, has worked this schedule since the start of the closure and feels that working from home has been challenging at times, but it is going better than she anticipated. Never having worked from home, Stephanie, like all teleworkers, had to establish a home office in order to stay connected with colleagues and clients. She remarked that “work could not grind to a halt and we knew we had to adopt a new way of communicating to keep projects moving forward.” Specifically, in-person meetings have been replaced by conference calls, a practice not previously used for Department meetings on a frequent basis. She admitted that while hard to get used to, conference calls restored some social connection and project collaboration. She expresses being “grateful that her conference calls are not visual and has learned from experience that when on a conference call it is best to mute your phone.”

There are varied views on each work scenario and it is clear that COVID-19 may permanently change the way many of us work. At present, teleworking allows us to rotate employees in and out of the office thus having a protected staff at all times. This article simply scratches the surface of the telework topic and it is focused on just Community Development. Many County Departments are getting to test out teleworking. And when it is safe to work together again, we will have learned how to work in ways that may be better for business, better for people and better for our communities.